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Agriculture
WESTERN HOMEMAKERS' CALENDAR:

TROUBLESOME STAINS:

A radio talk delivered by Miss Jean Stewart, Home Economist, Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, during the Western Farm and Home Hour Thursday, September 1, 1932, through Station KGO and nine other stations associated with the NBC-KGO network, Pacific Division, National Broadcasting Company.

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Small leaks may sink a ship, so the old saying goes. Some of the small leaks from the family pocketbook may result from such little things as spots and stains, rips and tears, and other damage to household textiles. Now household textiles take quite a prominent place on the budget. Think of all the table linen, bed linen, towels and so on that we use as well as all the clothing the family has and wears. The textile experts tell me that the mills of the United States turn out each year about thirty-six million square yards of cotton table damask alone. Then, when you add to these thirty-six million square yards of new cotton damask, all the fine imported linens and the table cloths and napkins treasured for generations, you see that the women of America have quite a job on their hands to keep all these fabrics in good condition. Even with the best of care, the loss through poor laundering and stains and tears is tremendous. And, as we mentioned, table linen is just one of the many textiles used in the household.

So in this job of keeping the home ship afloat, and preventing leaks, we women are interested in prolonging the life of fabrics. A person who offers help along that line is Miss Margaret Furry, a textile chemist over at the Bureau of Home Economics, who has made a special study of taking stains out of fabrics.

Stain removal is quite a big subject. One bulletin I've seen lists over a hundred different stains that may get on fabrics in the course of everyday use. But today we'll ask Miss Furry's advice on just a few especially troublesome stains.

First, let's inquire about fall fruit stains -- grape stains, for example, or peach stains.

Miss Furry says the way you deal with these depends on what kind of fabric the fruit stain is on. Is it white or is it colored? Is it cotton, linen, silk, wool or rayon? If the fabric is white and if it's cotton or linen, then you can bleach out the stain with little or no trouble. Let's assume that one of the tablecloths we just spoke of, a cloth of cotton damask, is badly stained with dark purple fruit juice. What to do about it?

Well, first stretch the stained part of the fabric over a bowl. Set the bowl on the floor and then, standing above it, pour the boiling water from a teakettle right down on the stain. The force and heat of that water will change the purple to blue and then gradually fade it out.

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But if you've already made the mistake of putting the stain into soapsuds, then more than likely you'll have to use a chemical bleach. Miss Furry says she always keeps a bottle of oxalic acid on hand. She buys the acid in white crystals and dissolves them in water as they are needed. This oxalic acid is a good bleach for stubborn fruit stains. Apply some of it to the spot, let it stand a few minutes, then try boiling water again. Keep this up until all traces of the stain are gone. Then rinse in clear water and wash the whole cloth well in soap and water to remove the acid. Or, better still, put a few drops of ammonia on the spot after rinsing. The ammonia, you see, is alkaline and will neutralize the acid.

Why be so careful that none of the acid is left on the fabric? Because it may make the fabric tender or even eat holes in it when you press it with a hot iron.

By the way, you might like to know how that acid is spelled. Oxalic, O-x-a-l-i-c, oxalic. Of course, that's not the only good bleach for fabrics. Javelle water is another and you can either buy that or make it at home. But oxalic acid is cheap and easy to get. Be sure to label it "Poison" in letters that anyone can read, keep it out of reach of the children, and use it only on white fabrics.

Is oxalic acid a good bleach for peach stains?

Miss Furry sighs at the mention of peach stains. She says they are a real problem because of the tannin in peaches.

Here's what to do, though, if your peach stains are on white cotton or linen. Soak the stained fabric in warm glycerine to loosen the tannin. Then apply oxalic acid solution. Rinse and neutralize with ammonia. The warm glycerine works equally well on colored fabrics, but on colored goods follow the glycerine with denatured alcohol, not with oxalic acid.

Someone asked the other day what to do with a pink silk dress that had a big smudge of car grease on it. Miss Furry says that's an easier problem than the peach stains. On the peach stains we had to use a bleach. But on the grease spot, we'll use a solvent. First, though, we'll loosen the black grease with clean white grease.

So to start, get plenty of soft clean clothes, some white vaseline or lard and a pound can of carbon tetrachloride. Carbon tetrachloride is nonexplosive, non-inflammable and fairly cheap. And it never makes the color run. You can buy it at the drug store in pound tins.

Now to get back to the pink dress with the spot of car grease. First scrape off all the black you can. Then turn the fabric over and from the under side work the lard or vaseline all over the spot. Then take one of the clean soft rags and pick up all the black you can. Apply more lard and repeat.

Next you apply the solvent. Turn the spot face down on a soft clean pad, and with a clean cloth apply plenty of the carbon tetrachloride. Dip the spot in a small bowl of the tetrachloride if necessary and don't be afraid to use

enough. That's the mistake people often make in stain removal.

Last of all, brush lightly or "feather" the edge of the spot with a cloth moistened with the tetrachloride so there won't be a ring. Then shake the spot dry.

If anyone wants more information about stain removal, write the Bureau of Home Economics in Washington, D. C., and your inquiry will be answered by an expert.

